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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 004625

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/24/2012

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [IZ](#) [IT](#) [IRAQI](#) [FREEDOM](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT OF GOI'S PARLIAMENT'S DEFENSE COMMITTEE
ON IRAQ, ITALIAN REINFORCEMENT OF OEF

REF: STATE 183517

CLASSIFIED BY: DCM EMIL SKODON. REASON:1.5 (B)(D)

[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY: ON SEPTEMBER 23, PARLIAMENTARY DEFENSE
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COMMITTEE PRESIDENT LUIGI RAMPONI TOLD DCM THAT HE WAS
CONFIDENT THAT UNSC MANDATED USE OF FORCE IN IRAQ WOULD HAVE
STRONG, ACROSS THE BOARD SUPPORT IN THE CHAMBER. UNILATERAL
OR LIMITED COALITION ACTION WOULD, HOWEVER, NOT BE SUPPORTED
BY THE CENTER-LEFT OPPOSITION. RAMPONI SAID THAT ALPINI
TROOP DEPLOYMENT TO OEF WAS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF DEPLOYMENT
LEGISLATION PASSED LAST FALL, AND HE COULD NOT PREDICT THE
EXTENT OF BIPARTISAN SUPPORT IN PARLIAMENT FOR SUCH A
DEPLOYMENT. END SUMMARY

[12.](#) (C) IN ANTICIPATION OF PARLIAMENTARY (CHAMBER OF
DEPUTIES) DEBATE ON IRAQ SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 25, DCM
REINFORCED WITH RAMPONI USG VIEWS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF
DISARMING SADDAM HUSSEIN, AND URGED RAMPONI TO DO WHAT HE
COULD TO SOLIDIFY SUPPORT IN PARLIAMENT. RAMPONI, A MEMBER
OF THE JUNIOR COALITION PARTNER NATIONAL ALLIANCE PARTY, SAID
THAT HE AGREED WITH THE USG POSITION, AND THAT THERE WAS
AGREEMENT FROM ACROSS THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SPECTRUM ON THE
IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING WMD FROM SADDAM. RAMPONI WILL MAKE A
SPEECH IN THE CHAMBER DURING THE SEPTEMBER 25 DEBATES, IN
WHICH HE WILL DRAW COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE CURRENT PROBLEMS
WITH IRAQ AND THE PRE 9/11 SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN. HE SAID
THAT HE WOULD CITE MULTIPLE VIOLATIONS OF SECURITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTIONS BY AFGHANISTAN IN 2000 AND 2001. THE RESOLUTIONS
HAD CALLED FOR, INTER ALIA, HALTING AID TO TERRORIST
ORGANIZATIONS AND EXTRADITING OSAMA BIN LADEN. HAD THE IC
BEEN MORE RESOLUTE IN ENFORCING THOSE RESOLUTIONS, SAID
RAMPONI, "WE WOULD NOT HAVE HAD A 9/11."

[13.](#) (C) RAMPONI SAID THAT HE SUPPORTS THE STRONG POSITION
THE U.S. HAS TAKEN IN ORDER TO PUSH THE UN TO ACTION AND TO
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"GET SOME ANSWERS" FROM SADDAM. IF INSPECTIONS WORK, AND THE
IC HAS TOTAL ASSURANCE THAT IT HAS SADDAM'S WEAPONS
PRODUCTION CAPABILITIES UNDER CONTROL, THEN PERHAPS WE CAN
AVOID WAR. IF SADDAM DOES NOT COOPERATE, THE UNSC MUST
REACT. THE USE OF FORCE UNDER A UN BANNER WOULD RECEIVE THE
SAME LEVEL OF SUPPORT IN THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENT AS GIVEN TO
OEF. HOWEVER, CONTINUED RAMPONI, IF THE U.S. GOES IT ALONE
OR WITH A SMALL COALITION, IT WOULD BE VERY HARD TO SECURE
SUPPORT FROM THE MINORITY CENTER-LEFT.

[14.](#) (C) TURNING TO THE U.S. REQUEST FOR A BATTALION OF THE
GOI'S ALPINI TROOPS TO BE DEPLOYED TO OEF, THE DCM REITERATED
THAT THE ALPINI WERE CAREFULLY SELECTED FOR THEIR EXPERTISE
BY CENTCOM STAFF. FURTHER, OUR REQUEST FOR THE ALPINI TROOPS
IS NOT LINKED TO ANY POSSIBLE U.S. DEPLOYMENT TO IRAQ.
RATHER, INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION IN OEF GROUND FORCE
DEPLOYMENT HAS DIMINISHED, TO THE POINT WHERE SOON ALMOST ALL
GROUND FORCES IN OEF WOULD BE U.S. THE ALPINI DEPLOYMENT
WOULD HELP CORRECT THAT SITUATION AND MEET PREVIOUSLY
IDENTIFIED OEF REQUIREMENTS.

[15.](#) (C) RAMPONI SAID THAT THE ALPINI WERE WELL TRAINED IN
MOUNTAIN COMBAT TACTICS, BUT NOT IN COUNTERTERRORISM
TECHNIQUES. HE SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE SOME DEBATE IN
PARLIAMENT ABOUT THE DEPLOYMENT SINCE IT WOULD GO BEYOND THE
SCOPE OF OEF SUPPORT LEGISLATION PASSED LAST FALL. RAMPONI
COULD NOT PREDICT THE LEVEL OF SUPPORT IN PARLIAMENT FOR SUCH
A DEPLOYMENT.

[16.](#) (C) COMMENT. WE CONTINUE TO ANTICIPATE SUFFICIENT
PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT FOR ALPINI DEPLOYMENT. OUR
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CONVERSATIONS WITH OFFICIALS FROM THROUGHOUT THE GOI INDICATE
THAT WHILE THE ALPINI DEPLOYMENT PROPOSAL MAY GENERATE SOME
DEBATE OVER THE NECESSITY OF PUTTING ITALIAN TROOPS IN HARM'S
WAY, PM BERLUSCONI WILL HAVE THE NECESSARY VOTES TO MAKE GOOD
ON HIS PROMISE TO PRESIDENT BUSH TO DEPLOY ALPINI TROOPS IN
AFGHANISTAN.
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